

NEWS RELEASE



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Old Coloma Schoolhouse; March 12 and 13 **Vintage Quilts Will be on Display in Historic Schoolhouse**

COLOMA -- Celebrate Women's History Month with a visit to "Stitches in Time," a quilt show featuring quilts made between 1845 and 1920.

The show will be held Saturday and Sunday, March 12 and 13, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Old Coloma Schoolhouse at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. Admission is free. The park day use fee is \$5 per car.

The Park is located in Coloma on Highway 49 between Placerville and Auburn. For more information call (530) 295-2162.

The event is presented by the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park and the Gold Discovery Park Association, a nonprofit organization whose mission it is to promote the interpretation and conservation of the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.

Additional detailed information regarding the "God and Grant" Quilt follows. Images of both the front and back of the quilt are available.

The God Quilt/Flying Birds/Birds in the Air:

The family Bible, in which Adam Lohry recorded family history, listed his marriage to Susan Deering Lohry in 1843. Born in Kentucky nineteen years earlier, Susan and Adam left that state for Missouri three years after their marriage. In 1853, they set out for the West in a covered wagon with their baby and four small children, all under eight years.

The peak of the gold rush was in 1852, and by 1853 over one hundred thousand prospectors had swarmed into the new state. They represented every state in America and every other country of Europe. In one year they retrieved eighty-one million dollars worth of gold from the slopes of the Sierra.

When the Lohrys arrived in Unionville (later called Lotus), California, they opened a general store, and just a few years later built a more permanent structure in brick. Their brick home, built a

year later in 1858, was burned to the ground when a four-year-old child, carrying a candle, accidentally set the curtains on fire. The house was rebuilt that same season.

Five more children were born in Unionville. Adam's handwritten note in the Bible includes two infant deaths and mention of an older daughter's elopement (her name is outlined in black). In 1880, Adam committed suicide by drowning himself in the American River, which ran through the back of their property. He was distraught over the theft of gold left in the safe at his store for safekeeping by local miners. His son-in-law was convicted and sent to prison for the crime.

In 1880, Susan placed an ad in the Placerville Mountain Democrat, offering a fifty-dollar reward for the recovery of Adam's body. The ad ran for one month, but no follow-up article indicates any recovery. A family burial plot in the Lotus cemetery, however, contains a tall marker with Adam's name engraved on it. Beside this is the grave of a son who had died a few years earlier at age nineteen. Susan died several years after Adam (1884), but no marker indicates her grave.

It was during her life in the brick house in Unionville that Susan made her Grant quilt, the back of which is of special interest. Salvaging remnants and scraps provided an important source of materials for quilts, and here is exceptional evidence of a salvage effort.

When Ulysses S. Grant ran for the U. S. Presidency in 1868, supporters organized torchlight parades, which had been popular outdoor political events since the late 1830's. Flaming torches provided illumination for the marching supporters and, along with banners, created dramatic effects for the campaigns. Once its political role was concluded, this hand-painted banner was given new life as the backing for Susan's quilt. On the front of the quilt, scraps from family clothing yielded an array of browns for the pieced Flying Birds. It is machine-quilted in an Ocean Waves pattern with diagonal lines in the border.

Susan made this quilt when she was forty-four (1868) with the help of three of her daughters -- Caroline, the eldest; Lucy, who married the son of the founder of Yountville; and Ann, who later worked on a Pacific Grove newspaper.

Perhaps Susan's quilt, which effectively combined political activities with domestic realities, influenced her five daughters. Besides Ann, two other daughters were involved with newspaper work---one who was a correspondent for a Williams, California, paper and one who worked for the Sacramento Bee.

The quilt was given to Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park on Dec. 2, 1997, by its owner, great-granddaughter of Susan. She commented, "I admire [her] greatly. She crossed the plains with five small children and in California she had five more. I wonder how she could have done it."

Author: Jean Ray Laury, from *Ho for California: Pioneer Women and Their Quilts*

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